**Turning Point**

**For All**

**Nations**

A STATEMENT OF THE

BAHÁ’Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

50TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE UNITED NATIONSs

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BAHÁ’Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

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“Turning Point for All Nations”

A Statement of the Bahá’í International Community

on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary

of the United Nations

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Table of Contents

I. Overview: An Opportunity for Reflection 1

IL Recognizing the Historical Context: A Call to World Leaders 4

III. Defining a Role for the UN Within the Emerging  
 International Order 6

A. Resuscitating the General Assembly 8

1. Raising minimum requirements for membership 8

2. Appointing a commission to study borders and frontiers 9

3. Searching for new financial arrangements 9

4. Making a commitment to a universal auxiliary language and a common script 9

5. Investigating the possibility of a single international currency 10

B. Developing a Meaningful Executive Function 10

1. Limiting the exercise of the veto power 11

2. Institutionalizing ad hoc military arrangements 11

3. Applying the notion of collective security to other problems  
of the global commons 11

4. Retaining successful UN institutions with independent executive function 12

C. A Strengthened World Court 12

1. Extending the Court’s jurisdiction 13

2. Coordinating the thematic courts 13

IV. Releasing the Power of the Individual:  
 A Critical Challenge of the Emerging International Order 13

A. Promoting Economic Development 14

1. Launching a determined campaign to implement Agenda 21 16

B. Protecting Fundamental Human Rights 16

1. Strengthening the machinery of the UN for monitoring,  
implementation and follow-up 17

2. Encouraging universal ratification of international conventions  
on human rights 17

3. Assuring respect for the monitoring organs of the UN involved  
in human rights 18

C. Advancing the Status of Women 18

1. Increasing the participation of women in member state delegations 20

2. Encouraging universal ratification of international conventions  
that protect women’s rights and improve their status 20

3. Planning ahead for implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action 20

D. Emphasizing Moral Development 20

1. Promoting the development of curricula for  
moral education in schools 21

V. A Turning Point for All Nations: A Call to World Leaders 21

Endnotes 23

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Turning Point for

All Nations

A Statement of the Bahá’í International Community on the Occasion of the

50th Anniversary of the United Nations

“Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage

which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of

city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully estab-

lished. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is

striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in

state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to matu-

rity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of

human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can

best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life.”

Shoghi Effendi, 1936

# I. Overview: An Opportunity for Reflection

The 20th Century, one of the most tumultuous periods in human history,

has been marked by numerous upheavals, revolutions and radical departures

from the past. Ranging from the collapse of the colonial system and the great

nineteenth century empires to the rise and fall of broad and disastrous experi-

ments with totalitarianism, fascism and communism, some of these upheavals

have been extremely destructive, involving the deaths of millions, the eradication

of old lifestyles and traditions, and the collapse of time-honored institutions.

Other movements and trends have been more obviously positive.

Scientific discoveries and new social insights have spurred many progressive

social, economic and cultural transformations. The way has been cleared for

new definitions of human rights and affirmations of personal dignity, expand-

ed opportunities for individual and collective achievement, and bold new

avenues for the advancement of human knowledge and consciousness.

These twin processes—the collapse of old institutions on the one hand

and the blossoming of new ways of thinking on the other—are evidence of a

single trend which has been gaining momentum during the last hundred years:

the trend toward ever-increasing interdependence and integration of humanity.

This trend is observable in wide-ranging phenomena, from the fusion of

world financial markets, which in turn reflect humanity’s reliance on diverse

and interdependent sources of energy, food, raw materials, technology and

knowledge, to the construction of globe-girdling systems of communications

and transportation. It is reflected in the scientific understanding of the earth’s

interconnected biosphere, which has in turn given a new urgency to the need

for global coordination. It is manifest, albeit in a destructive way, in the

capacities of modern weapons systems, which have gradually increased in

power to the point where it is now possible for a handful of men to bring an

end to human civilization itself. It is the universal consciousness of this trend—

in both its constructive and destructive expressions—that lends such poignancy

to the familiar photograph of the earth as a swirling sphere of blue and white

against the infinite blackness of space, an image crystallizing the realization

that we are a single people, rich in diversity, living in a common homeland.

This trend is reflected, too, in steady efforts by the nations of the world

to forge a world political system that can secure for humanity the possibility

of peace, justice and prosperity. Twice in this century humanity has attempt-

ed to bring about a new international order. Each attempt sought to address

the emergent recognition of global interdependence, while nevertheless pre-

serving intact a system which put the sovereignty of the state above all else. In

the perspective of the century now ending, the League of Nations, a break-

through in the concept of collective security, marked a first, decisive step

toward world order.

The second effort, born from the cataclysm of World War II and based

on a Charter drawn up principally by the victors of that conflagration, has for

fifty years provided an international forum of last resort, a unique institution

standing as a noble symbol for the collective interests of humanity as a whole.

As an international organization, the United Nations has demonstrated

humanity’s capacity for united action in health, agriculture, education, envi-

ronmental protection, and the welfare of children. It has affirmed our collec-

tive moral will to build a better future, evinced in the widespread adoption of

international human rights Covenants. It has revealed the human race’s deep-

seated compassion, evidenced by the devotion of financial and human

resources to the assistance of people in distress. And in the all-important

realms of peace-building, peace-making and peace-keeping, the United

Nations has blazed a bold path toward a future without war.[1]

Yet the overall goals set out in the Charter of the United Nations have

proved elusive. Despite the high hopes of its founders, the establishment of

the United Nations some fifty years ago did not usher in an era of peace and

prosperity for all.[2]

Although the United Nations has surely played a role in preventing a

third world war, the last half decade has nevertheless been marked by numer-

ous local, national and regional conflicts costing millions of lives. No sooner

had improved relations between the superpowers removed the ideological

motivation for such conflicts, than long-smoldering ethnic and sectarian pas-

sions surfaced as a new source of conflagration. In addition, although the end

of the Cold War has reduced the threat of a global, terminal war, there remain

instruments and technologies—and to some extent the underlying passions—

which could bring about planet-wide destruction.

With respect to social issues, likewise, grave problems persist. While new

levels of consensus have been reached on global programs to promote health,

sustainable development and human rights, the situation on the ground in

many areas has deteriorated. The alarming spread of militant racialism and

religious fanaticism, the cancerous growth of materialism, the epidemic rise of

crime and organized criminality, the widespread increase in mindless violence,

the ever-deepening disparity between rich and poor, the continuing inequities

faced by women, the intergenerational damage caused by the pervasive break-

down of family life, the immoral excesses of unbridled capitalism and the

growth of political corruption—all speak to this point. At least a billion live in

abject poverty and more than a third of the world’s people are illiterate.[3]

As the twin processes of collapse and renewal carry the world toward

some sort of culmination, the 50th anniversary of the United Nations offers a

timely opportunity to pause and reflect on how humanity may collectively face

its future. Indeed, there has emerged of late a wide range of useful proposals

for strengthening the United Nations and improving its capacity to coordinate

the responses of nations to these challenges.

These proposals fall roughly into three categories. One group addresses

primarily bureaucratic, administrative and financial problems within the

United Nations system. Another group comprises those that suggest reconfig-

uring bodies like the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council

and the Bretton Woods economic institutions. Still others propose to under-

take changes in the United Nations political structure, calling, for example,

for an expansion of the Security Council and/or a reconsideration of the

United Nations Charter itself.[4]

Most of these works are constructive; some are also provocative. Among

them, one of the most balanced and thoughtful is the report of the

Commission on Global Governance, entitled, Our Global Neighborhood,

which argues for the widespread adoption of new values, as well as structural

reforms in the United Nations system.[5]

It is in the spirit of contributing to the ongoing discussion and consultation

on this issue of paramount importance that the Bahá’í International Community

has been moved to share its views. Our perspective is based on three initial

propositions.

First, discussions about the future of the United Nations need to take place

within the broad context of the evolution of the international order and its direc-

tion. The United Nations has co-evolved with other great institutions of the late

twentieth century. It is in the aggregate that these institutions will defineand

themselves be shaped by—the evolution of the international order. Therefore, the

mission, role, operating principles and even activities of the United Nations

should be examined only in the light of how they fit within the broader objective

of the international order.

Second, since the body of humankind is one and indivisible, each member of

the human race is born into the world as a trust of the whole. This relationship

between the individual and the collective constitutes the moral foundation of most

of the human rights which the instruments of the United Nations are attempting

to define. It also serves to define an overriding purpose for the international order

in establishing and preserving the rights of the individual.

Third, the discussions about the future of the international order

must involve and excite the generality of humankind. This discussion is

so important that it cannot be confined to leaders—be they in government,

business, the academic community, religion, or organizations of civil society.

On the contrary, this conversation must engage women and men at the grass-

roots level. Broad participation will make the process self-reinforcing by

raising awareness of world citizenship and increase support for an expanded

international order.

# IL Recognizing the Historical Context: A Call to World Leaders

The Bahá’í International Community regards the current world confusion

and the calamitous condition of human affairs as a natural phase in an organic

process leading ultimately and irresistibly to the unification of the human race

in a single social order whose boundaries are those of the planet.

The human race, as a distinct, organic unit, has passed through evolution-

ary stages analogous to the stages of infancy and childhood in the lives of its indi-

vidual members, and is now in the culminating period of its turbulent adoles-

cence approaching its long-awaited coming of age.[6] The process of global inte-

gration, already a reality in the realms of business, finance, and communica-

tions, is beginning to materialize in the political arena.

Historically, this process has been accelerated by sudden and catastrophic

events. It was the devastation of World Wars I and II that gave birth to the

League of Nations and the United Nations, respectively. Whether future accom-

plishments are also to be reached after similarly unimaginable horrors or embraced

through an act of consultative will, is the choice before all who inhabit the

earth. Failure to take decisive action would be unconscionably irresponsible.

Since sovereignty currently resides with the nation-state, the task of deter-

mining the exact architecture of the emerging international order is an obliga-

tion that rests with heads of state and with governments. We urge leaders at all

levels to take a deliberate role in supporting a convocation of world leaders

before the turn of this century to consider how the international order might be

redefined and restructured to meet the challenges facing the world. As some

have suggested, this gathering might be called the World Summit on Global

Governance.[7]

This proposed Summit might build on the experience gained from the

series of highly successful United Nations conferences in the early 1990s. These

conferences, which have included the World Summit for Children in 1990, the

Earth Summit in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the

International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the World

Summit for Social Development in 1995 and the Fourth World Conference on

Women in 1995, have established a new methodology for global deliberations

on critical issues.

A key to the success of these deliberations has been the substantive par-

ticipation by organizations of civil society. Painstaking negotiations among

government delegations about changes in the world’s political, social and eco-

nomic structures have been informed and shaped by the vigorous involvement

of these organizations, which tend to reflect the needs and concerns of people

at the grass roots. It is also significant that in each case, the gathering of world

leaders, in the presence of civil society and the global media, gave the stamp of

legitimacy and consensus to the processes of the conference.

In preparing for the proposed Summit, world leaders would be wise to heed

these lessons, to reach out to as wide a circle as possible and to secure the

goodwill and support of the world’s peoples.

Some fear that international political institutions inevitably evolve

toward excessive centralization and constitute an unwarranted layer of

bureaucracy. It needs to be explicitly and forcefully stated that any new

structures for global governance must, as a matter of both principle and

practicality, ensure that the responsibility for decision-making remains at

appropriate levels.[8]

Striking the right balance may not always be easy. On the one hand,

genuine development and real progress can be achieved only by people

themselves, acting individually and collectively, in response to the specific

concerns and needs of their time and place. It can be argued that the

decentralization of governance is the *sine qua non* of development.[9] On the other

hand, the international order clearly requires a degree of global direction

and coordination.

Therefore, in accordance with the principles of decentralization outlined

above, international institutions should be given the authority to act only on

issues of international concern where states cannot act on their own or to

intervene for the preservation of the rights of peoples and member states. All

other matters should be relegated to national and local institutions.[10]

Furthermore, in devising a specific framework for the future international

order, leaders should survey a broad range of approaches to governance.

Rather than being modeled after any single one of the recognized systems of

government, the solution may embody, reconcile and assimilate within its

framework such wholesome elements as are to be found in each one of them.

For example, one of the time-tested models of governance that may

accommodate the world’s diversity within a unified framework is the federal

system. Federalism has proved effective in decentralizing authority and deci-

sion-making in large, complex, and heterogeneous states, while maintaining a

degree of overall unity and stability. Another model worth examining is the

commonwealth, which at the global level would place the interest of the

whole ahead of the interest of any individual nation.

Extraordinary care must be taken in designing the architecture of the

international order so that it does not over time degenerate into any form of

despotism, of oligarchy, or of demagogy corrupting the life and machinery of

the constituent political institutions.

In 1955, during the first decade review of the UN charter, the Bahá’í

International Community offered a statement to the United Nations, based on

ideas articulated nearly a century before by Bahá’u’lláh. “The Bahá’í concept

of world order is defined in these terms: A world Super-State in whose favor

all the nations of the world will have ceded every claim to make war, certain

rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for the

purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions.

This State will have to include an International Executive adequate to enforce

supreme and unchallengeable authority on every recalcitrant member of the

Commonwealth; a World Parliament whose members are elected by the peo-

ples in their respective countries and whose election is confirmed by their

respective governments; a Supreme Tribunal whose judgment has a binding

effect even in cases where the parties concerned have not voluntarily agreed to

submit their case to its consideration.”[11]

While we believe this formulation of a world government is at once the

ultimate safeguard and the inevitable destiny of humankind, we do recognize

that it represents a long-term picture of a global society. Given the pressing

nature of the current state of affairs, the world requires bold, practical and

actionable strategies that go beyond inspiring visions of the future.

Nevertheless, by focusing on a compelling concept, a clear and consistent

direction for evolutionary change emerges from the mire of contradictory

views and doctrines.

# III. Defining a Role for the UN Within the Emerging international Order

The United Nations was the centerpiece of the international system creat-

ed by the victors of World War II and, during the long decades of ideological

conflict between the East and the West, it served its original purpose as a

forum for international dialogue. Over the years, its mandate has been ex-

panded to include not only international standard-setting and promotion of social

and economic development but also peacekeeping operations on several continents.

Over the same period, the political reality of our world has experienced a

dramatic transformation. At the time of the UN’s inception, there were some

fifty independent states. That number has grown to exceed 185. At the close

of World War II, governments were the main actors on the global scene.

Today, the growing influence of organizations of civil society and of multina-

tional corporations has created a much more intricate political landscape.

Despite the growing complexity in its mission, the United Nations system

has retained more or less the same structure that was designed for a new

international organization some fifty years ago. It is not surprising then that

the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary has stimulated a new dialogue about its

ability to meet the political realities of the 21st Century. Unfortunately, in this

dialogue, criticism has far outweighed praise.

Most criticisms of the operations of the United Nations are based on compar-

isons with the operations of the leading organizations in the private sector or on

inflated initial expectations. Although some specific comparisons may be useful

in improving the efficiency of the United Nations, more general exercises of this

kind are essentially unfair. The United Nations lacks not only the clear authority,

but also the requisite resources to act effectively in most instances. Accusations

of the UN’s failure are in fact indictments of the member states themselves.

Judged in isolation from the reality within which it operates, the United

Nations will always seem inefficient and ineffective. However, if it is viewed

as one element of a larger process of development in systems of international

order, the bright light of analysis would shift from the UN’s shortcomings and

failures to shine on its victories and accomplishments. To those with an

evolutionary mindset, the early experience of the United Nations offers us a

rich source of learnings about its future role within the international regime.

An evolutionary mindset implies the ability to envision an institution

over a long time frame perceiving its inherent potential for development,

identifying the fundamental principles governing its growth, formulating high-

impact strategies for short-term implementation, and even anticipating radical

discontinuities along its path.

Studying the United Nations from this perspective unveils significant

opportunities to strengthen the current system without the wholesale restruc-

turing of its principal institutions or the intensive re-engineering of its core

processes. In fact, we submit that no proposal for UN reform can produce

high impact unless its recommendations are internally consistent and direct

the UN along a projected evolutionary path toward a distinctive and relevant

role within the future international order.

We believe the combination of recommendations described herein meets

these conditions and that their adoption would represent a measured but sig-

nificant step toward building a more just world order.[12]

## A. Resuscitating the General Assembly

The foundation for any system of governance is the rule of law and the

primary institution for promulgating law is the legislature. While the authori-

ty of local and national legislatures is generally respected, regional and inter-

national legislative bodies have been the subject of fear and suspicion.

In addition, the United Nations General Assembly has been a target of

attack for its ineffectiveness. Although some of the accusations hurled against

it are unfounded, there are at least two shortcomings that hamper the ability

of the General Assembly to have impact.

First, the current arrangement gives undue weight to state sovereignty,

resulting in a curious mix of anarchy and conservatism. In a reformed United

Nations, the legislative branch and its voting structure will need to represent

more accurately the people of the world as well as nation-states.[13]

Second, General Assembly resolutions are not binding unless they are

separately ratified as a treaty by each member state. If the current system,

which places state sovereignty above all other concerns, is to give way to a

system which can address the interests of a single and interdependent humani-

ty, the resolutions of the General Assembly—within a limited domain of issues

—must gradually come to possess the force of law with provisions for both

enforcement and sanctions.

These two shortcomings are closely linked inasmuch as the majority of

the world’s people, suspicious and fearful of world government, are unlikely

to submit to an international institution unless it is itself more genuinely rep-

resentative.[14]

Nevertheless, in the short term, five practical measures are possible to

strengthen the General Assembly, enhance its reputation and align it with a

longer term direction.

### 1. Raising minimum requirements for membership

The minimum standards for conduct by a government towards its people

have been well established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and

subsequent international covenants, collectively referred to as the

International Bill of Human Rights.

Without an unshakable commitment to regular and periodic elections

with universal participation by secret ballot, to freedom of expression and to

other such human rights, a member state stands in the way of the active and

intelligent participation of the vast majority of its population in the affairs of

its own communities.

We propose that there should be consequences for member states that

violate these standards. Similarly, nations seeking recognition should be

denied membership until they openly espouse these standards or make recog-

nizable efforts to move in that direction.

### 2. Appointing a commission to study borders and frontiers

Outstanding irredentist claims continue to be a major source of conflict

and war, highlighting the critical need for general agreements on national

boundaries. Such treaties can only be arrived at after consideration of the

arbitrary manner in which many nation-states were originally defined and of

all outstanding claims of nations and ethnic groups.

Rather than relegating such claims to the World Court, we believe it

would be best to establish a special International Commission to research all

claims affecting international boundaries and then, after careful considera-

tion, to make recommendations for action.[15] The results would serve as an

early warning system for growing tension among civil or ethnic groups and

assessment of threats in situations benefiting from early preventive diplomacy.

In order to establish a genuine community of nations in the long run, it

will be necessary to settle finally all disputes over borders. This research

would serve that end.

### 3. Searching for new financial arrangements

Primarily triggered by the unwillingness of some member states to remit

their general assessments on time, compounded by the absence of authority to

collect any interest accrued because of that delay, and further aggravated by

the bureaucratic inefficiencies in parts of its operations, the annual budget

shortfall pressures the UN into a crisis management mentality.

Voluntary payments from member states will never be a reliable

approach to finance an international institution. Vigorous approaches to rev-

enue generation must be devised to enable the smooth functioning of the UN

machinery. We propose the immediate appointment of an expert Task Force

to begin a rigorous search for solutions.

In studying alternatives, the Task Force should be mindful of several fun-

damental principles. First, there should be no assessments without representa-

tion. Second, in the interest of fairness and justice, assessments should be

graduated. Third, mechanisms for encouraging voluntary contributions by

individuals and communities should not be overlooked.[16]

### 4. Making a commitment to a universal auxiliary language and a common script

The United Nations, which currently uses six official languages, would

derive substantial benefit from either choosing a single existing language or

creating a new one to be used as an auxiliary language in all its fora. Such a

step has long been advocated by many groups, from the Esperantists to the

Bahá’í International Community itself.[17] In addition to saving money and

simplifying bureaucratic procedures, such a move would go far toward pro-

moting a spirit of unity.

We propose the appointment of a high-level Commission, with members

from various regions and drawn from relevant fields, including linguistics,

economics, the social sciences, education and the media, to begin careful

study on the matter of an international auxiliary language and the adoption

of a common script.

We foresee that eventually, the world cannot but adopt a single, univer-

sally agreed-upon auxiliary language and script to be taught in schools world-

wide, as a supplement to the language or languages of each country. The

objective would be to facilitate the transition to a global society through better

communication among nations, reduction of administrative costs for businesses,

governments and others involved in global enterprise, and a general fostering

of more cordial relations between all members of the human family.[18]

This proposal should be read narrowly. It does not in any way envision

the decline of any living language or culture.

### 5. Investigating the possibility of a single international currency

The need to promote the adoption of a global currency as a vital element

in the integration of the global economy is self-evident. Among other benefits,

economists believe that a single currency will curb unproductive speculation

and unpredictable market swings, promote a leveling of incomes and prices

worldwide, and thereby result in significant savings.[19]

The possibility of savings will not lead to action unless there is an over-

whelming body of evidence addressing the relevant concerns and doubts of

skeptics, accompanied by a credible implementation plan. We propose the

appointment of a Commission consisting of the most accomplished govern-

ment leaders, academics and professionals to begin immediate exploration

into the economic benefits and the political costs of a single currency and to

hypothesize about an effective implementation approach.

## B. Developing a Meaningful Executive Function

At the international level, the single most important executive function is

the enforcement of a collective security pact.[20]

Collective security implies a binding covenant among nations to act in

concert against threats to the collective. The effectiveness of the covenant

depends on the degree to which members commit themselves to the collective

good, even if motivated by a sense of enlightened self-interest.

Within the United Nations, the enforcement role is largely carried out by

the Security Council, with other functions of the executive being shared with the

Secretariat. Both are hampered in fulfilling their mandated roles. The Security

Council suffers from an inability to take decisive action. The Secretariat is

pressured by the complex demands of the member states.

In the short term, four practical measures are possible to strengthen the

executive function within the United Nations.

### 1. Limiting the exercise of the veto power

The original intention of the UN Charter in conferring veto power on the

five Permanent Members was to prevent the Security Council from authorizing

military actions against a Permanent Member or requiring the use of its forces

against its will.[21] In fact, beginning with the Cold War, the veto power has been

exercised repeatedly for reasons that have to do with regional or national security.

In its 1955 submission on UN reform, the Bahá’í International

Community argued for the gradual elimination of the concepts of “permanent

membership” and “veto power” as confidence in the Security Council would

build. Today, forty years later, we reaffirm that position. However, we also

propose that, as a transitionary step, measures be introduced to curb the exer-

cise of the veto power to reflect the original intention of the Charter.

### 2. Institutionalizing ad hoc military arrangements

To support the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations, and to

add credibility to resolutions of the Security Council, an International Force

should be created.[22] Its loyalty to the UN and its independence from national

considerations must be assured. The command and control of such a fully

armed Force would reside with the Secretary-General under the authority of

the Security Council. Its finances, however, would be determined by the

General Assembly. In constructing such a force, the Secretary-General would

seek to draw competent personnel from all regions of the world.

If properly implemented, this Force would also provide a sense of securi-

ty that might encourage steps toward global disarmament, thereby making

possible an outright ban on all weapons of mass destruction.[23] Furthermore,

in line with the principle of collective security, it would become gradually

understood that states need only maintain armaments sufficient for their own

defense and the maintenance of internal order.

As an immediate step toward the establishment of this Force, the present

system of ad hoc arrangements could be institutionalized to establish core

regional forces for rapid deployment during a crisis.

### 3. Applying the notion of collective security to other problems of the global commons

Although originally conceived within the context of a threat of military

aggression, the principle of collective security, some argue, may now be

applied in an expansive manner to all threats which, although apparently

local in nature, are actually the result of the complex breakdown of the pre-

sent-day global order. These threats include but are not limited to international

drug trafficking, food security, and the emergence of new global pandemics.[24]

We believe this issue would have to be included on the agenda of the pro-

posed Global Summit. However, it is unlikely that expansive formulations of

collective security would preclude the fundamental cause of military aggression.

### 4. Retaining successful UN institutions with independent executive function

Some of the more independent organizations within the UN family, such

as the UN International Children’s Emergency Fund, the International Civil

Aviation Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the International

Telegraph and Communications Union, the International Labor Organization,

and the World Health Organization, have enjoyed conspicuous success with

focused but important areas of international concern.

Generally, these organizations already have their own executive function.

Their independence should be retained and reinforced as part of the interna-

tional executive.[25]

## C. A Strengthened World Court

In any system of governance, a strong judicial function is necessary to

moderate the powers of the other branches and to enunciate, promulgate,

protect and deliver justice. The drive to create just societies has been among

the fundamental forces in history[26]—and without doubt no lasting world civi-

lization can be founded unless it is firmly grounded in the principle of justice.

Justice is the one power that can translate the dawning consciousness of

humanity’s oneness into a collective will through which the necessary struc-

tures of global community life can be confidently erected. An age that sees

the people of the world increasingly gaining access to information of every

kind and to a diversity of ideas will find justice asserting itself as the ruling

principle of successful social organization.

At the individual level, justice is that faculty of the human soul that

enables each person to distinguish truth from falsehood. In the sight of God,

Bahá’u’lláh avers, justice is “the best beloved of all things” since it permits

each individual to see with his own eyes rather than the eyes of others, to

know through his own knowledge rather than the knowledge of his neighbor

or his group.

At the group level, a concern for justice is the indispensable compass in

collective decision-making, because it is the only means by which unity of

thought and action can be achieved. Far from encouraging the punitive spirit

that has often masqueraded under its name in past ages, justice is the practical

expression of awareness that, in the achievement of human progress, the

interests of the individual and those of society are inextricably linked.

To the extent that justice becomes a guiding concern of human interaction, a

consultative climate is encouraged that permits options to be examined dis-

passionately and appropriate courses of action selected. In such a climate the

perennial tendencies toward manipulation and partisanship are far less likely

to deflect the decision-making process.

Such a conception of justice will be gradually reinforced by the realiza-

tion that in an interdependent world, the interests of the individual and soci-

ety are inextricably intertwined. In this context, justice is a thread that must

be woven into the consideration of every interaction, whether in the family,

the neighborhood, or at the global level.

We see in the current United Nations system the foundation for a

strengthened World Court. Established in 1945 as the principal judicial organ

of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice is characterized by

many positive elements. The current system for the selection of judges, for

example, seeks to create a judicial panel which is representative of a wide

range of peoples, regions, and judicial systems.[27]

The Court’s primary shortcoming is that it lacks the authority to issue

legally binding decisions, except in those cases where states have chosen in

advance to be bound by its decisions. Without jurisdiction, the Court is pow-

erless to administer justice.[28] In time, the decisions of the World Court may

become binding and enforceable upon all states; however, in the short term,

the World Court might be strengthened through two other measures.

### 1. Extending the Court’s jurisdiction

Currently, the Court’s jurisdiction is limited to a few categories of cases,

and only nations have standing to bring an action. We propose that in addi-

tion to member states, other organs of the United Nations should be given the

right to bring cases before the Court.

### 2. Coordinating the thematic courts

The World Court should act as an umbrella for existing and new thematic

courts, that arbitrate and adjudicate international cases within specific

thematic domains.

Early components of a unified system can already be found in the special-

ized courts for arbitration of such matters as commerce and transportation,

and in the proposals for such bodies as an International Criminal Court and a

Chamber for Environmental Matters. Other issue areas that might need to be

addressed under such a system would include courts for international terror-

ism and drug trafficking.

# IV. Releasing the Power of the Individual: A Critical Challenge of the Emerging International Order

The primary objective of governing institutions at all levels is the

advancement of human civilization. This objective is difficult to satisfy with-

out the inspired and intelligent participation of the generality of humankind

in the life and affairs of the community.

With a focus on building institutions and creating a community of

nations, international bodies have historically remained distant from the

minds and hearts of the world’s people. Separated by several layers of govern-

ment from the international arena and confused by the media’s coverage of

international news, the vast majority of people have not yet developed an

affinity for institutions like the United Nations. Only those individuals

who have had some access to the international arena through channels like

organizations of civil society seem able to identify with these institutions.

Paradoxically, international institutions cannot develop into an effective

and mature level of government and fulfil their primary objective to advance

human civilization, if they do not recognize and nurture their relationship of

mutual dependency with the people of the world. Such recognition would set

in motion a virtuous cycle of trust and support that would accelerate’ the tran-

sition to a new world order.

The tasks entailed in the development of a global society call for levels of

capacity far beyond anything the human race has so far been able to muster.

Reaching these levels will require an enormous expansion in access to knowl-

edge on the part of every individual. International institutions will succeed in

eliciting and directing the potentialities latent in the peoples of the world to

the extent that their exercise of authority is moderated by their obligation to

win the confidence, respect, and genuine support of those whose actions they

seek to govern and to consult openly and to the fullest extent possible with all

those whose interests are affected.

Individuals who become confident and respectful of these institutions will,

in turn, demand that their national governments increase their support, both

political and economic, for the international order. In turn, the international

institutions, with increased influence and power, will be better positioned to

undertake further actions to establish a legitimate and effective world order.

Along with the measures for strengthening its structure, the United

Nations needs to adopt initiatives that release the latent power in all people to

participate in this galvanizing process. To this end, certain themes that accel-

erate the advancement of the individual and society warrant special considera-

tion. Among them, promoting economic development, protecting human

rights, advancing the status of women, and emphasizing moral development

are four priorities so closely tied to the advancement of civilization that they

must be emphasized as part of the United Nations agenda.

## A. Promoting Economic Development

Economic development strategies employed by the United Nations, the

World Bank and a number of governments during the last fifty years, however

sincerely conceived and executed, have fallen far short of aspirations. In much

of the world, the gap between the “haves” and “have-nots” has widened and

is accelerating with the persistent disparity in income levels. Social problems

have not subsided. In fact, crime and disease are not just on the rise; they are

also becoming endemic and more difficult to combat.

These failures can be traced to a number of factors. They include a mis-

placed focus on large-scale projects and bureaucratic over-centralization,

unjust terms of international trade, a pervasive corruption that has been

allowed to flourish throughout the system, the exclusion of women from the

decision-making processes at all levels, a general inability to ensure that

resources reach the poor, and the diversion of development resources into mil-

itary hardware.

A dispassionate examination of these factors betrays a common system-

atic and fundamental flaw in the current paradigm for economic development:

material needs are often addressed without taking into account the spiritual

factors and their motivating power.

Development should not become confused with the creation of an unsus-

tainable consumer society. True prosperity encompasses spiritual as well as

material well-being. Food, drink, shelter and a degree of material comfort are

essential, but human beings cannot and never will find fulfilment in these

necessities. Nor is contentment to be found in the somewhat more intangible

material attainments such as social recognition or political power. Ultimately,

not even intellectual achievement satisfies our deepest needs.

It is in the hunger for something more, something beyond ourselves, that

the reality of the human spirit can be properly understood. Although the spiri-

tual side of our nature is obscured by the day-to-day struggle for material

attainment, our need for the transcendent cannot long be disregarded. Thus a

sustainable development paradigm must address both the spiritual aspirations

of human beings and their material needs and desires.

Education is the best investment in economic development. “Man is the

supreme Talisman. Lack of a proper education hath, however, deprived him of

that which he doth inherently possess,” writes Bahá’u’lláh. “Regard man as a

mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to

reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.”[29] Education,

implies more than a process of mastering a narrow body of knowledge or

learning a set of life skills. In truth, education, which should be a fundamen-

tal imperative of development, must also teach the process for knowledge

acquisition, cultivate the powers of intellect and reasoning, and infuse the stu-

dent with indispensable moral qualities.

It is this comprehensive approach to education that allows people to con-

tribute to the creation of wealth and encourage its just distribution.[30]

Genuine wealth is created when work is undertaken not simply as a

means of earning a livelihood but also as a way to contribute to society. We

hold that meaningful work is a basic need of the human soul, as important to

the proper development of the individual as nutritious food, clean water and

fresh air are to the physical body.

Because of the spiritually damaging nature of dependency, schemes which

focus solely on redistributing material wealth are doomed to failure in the long

run. Distribution of wealth must be approached in an efficient and equitable man-

ner. In fact, it must be intimately integrated with the process of wealth creation.

We propose the following recommendation to the United Nations system

for promoting more effective development.

### 1. Launching a determined campaign to implement Agenda 21

The plan of action formulated at the United Nations Conference on

Environment and Development incorporated a wide range of views from civil

society and a set of principles not unlike those articulated in this statement.

Unfortunately, however, little has been done by member states to implement

the measures described in the plan.

If the objectives of Agenda 21 are to be addressed and satisfied, an

expanded effort, different in nature but comparable in scale and commitment

to the Marshall Plan for the redevelopment of post-war Europe, might be nec-

essary. In this case, the Bretton Woods institutions would be called upon to

mount a pronounced campaign to expedite national implementation efforts.

A mandate of this nature can result only from a conference, similar to the first

Bretton Woods meetings fifty years ago, dedicated to a wholesale re-examina-

tion of these institutions. The purpose of this re-examination would be to

make available to the people of the world sufficient resources so that they

could implement local initiatives. Moreover, the conference could also expand

its agenda to address deeper issues of global economic security through the

redefinition of existing institutions or the creation of new structures.[31]

If successful, this new machinery could also be extended to coordinate

implementation of the measures identified at the recent Social Summit.

## B. Protecting Fundamental Human Rights

Over the five decades since the United Nations was founded, an under-

standing has emerged that human rights must be recognized and protected

internationally if peace, social progress and economic prosperity are to be

established.

The foundation for international agreement on the nature of human

rights is the all-important Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted

by the United Nations in 1948 and elaborated in two international covenants

—the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the

International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. In addition,

some 75 other conventions and declarations identify and promote the rights

of women and children, the right to freedom of worship, and the right to

development, to name but a few.

The current United Nations human rights regime has two major short-

comings: limited means for enforcement and follow-up, and too little empha-

sis on the responsibilities that accompany all rights.

Human rights enforcement at the international level needs to be handled

in a manner similar to the treatment of military aggression under a collective

security regime. The violation of human rights in one state must be considered

the concern of all, and enforcement mechanisms must provide for a unified

response on the part of the entire international community. The question of

when and how to intervene to protect human rights is more difficult to

answer. Vigorous enforcement will require a high degree of global consensus

on what constitutes a flagrant and willful violation.

Important steps toward global consensus were taken during the process

leading up to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, which affirmed

unequivocally that human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent,

and ended the long-standing debate about the relative importance of civil and

political rights as compared to social, economic and cultural rights.[32]

Conference resolutions also confirmed that human rights must be applied irre-

spective of differences of racial background, ethnic origin, religious belief or

national identity. They encompass the equality of women and men; they

include for all individuals worldwide the same rights to freedom of investiga-

tion, information and religious practice; and they embody the right of every-

one to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and health care.[33] Beyond the

need to build consensus and strengthen enforcement of human rights, it is

important to establish a greater understanding that to each right is attached a

corresponding responsibility.

The right to be recognized as a person before the law, for example,

implies the responsibility to obey the law—and to make both the laws and the

legal system more just. Likewise, in the socio-economic realm, the right to

marry carries with it the responsibility to support the family unit, to educate

one’s children and to treat all family members with respect.[34] The right to

work cannot be divorced from the responsibility to perform one’s duties to the

best of one’s ability. In the broadest sense, the notion of “universal” human

rights implies a responsibility to humanity as a whole.

Ultimately, while it is up to the individual to fulfill the responsibility in

each such area, it is up to international institutions to protect the related

human right. We propose three measures for immediate action.

### 1. Strengthening the machinery of the UN for monitoring, implementation and follow-up

The United Nations machinery for the monitoring, implementation and

follow-up of government compliance with international covenants is inade-

quate. The Centre for Human Rights consists of a very small professional

staff struggling to support efforts to monitor the compliance by countries of

all treaties they have ratified.

We believe the resources assigned to this Centre must be dramatically

increased if it is to discharge its duties properly.

### 2. Encouraging universal ratification of international conventions on human rights

Since ratifying the international conventions on human rights creates an

obligation for member states, albeit not a practically enforceable one, the

Secretary-General and all bodies of the UN might consider every opportunity

to encourage member states to act on this issue. In fact, a demanding timeline

for universal ratification may be an inspiring goal to be set by the General

Assembly.

### 3. Assuring respect for the monitoring organs of the UN involved in human rights

Since the mandate of the human rights monitoring agencies is of a very

serious nature, the UN needs to be particularly mindful of perceptions created

by the structure and processes of these agencies and equally deliberate in act-

ing to resolve compromising situations.

We believe it would be prudent to explore during the nomination process

the qualifications of member states in visible positions and to exclude from

election to membership on the Commission on Human Rights and other mon-

itoring agencies, any member states that have not yet ratified the international

conventions. While these member states would still be able to fully participate

in deliberations, it would protect the United Nations from a potentially

embarrassing and compromising situation.

We also believe that a single exception is warranted to the above rule.

Member states, not under the scrutiny of the UN, that have sufficient protec-

tion for fundamental human rights within their constitutions, but which have

not been able to complete the ratification process because of internal political

reasons, should not be barred from election to visible positions.

Finally, it also seems prudent for member states that have ratified the

international conventions but are under scrutiny for gross human rights viola-

tions to be disqualified from election to the offices of conferences and other

meetings of the Commission on Human Rights. This will prevent a wide-

spread perception of the proceedings as a mockery.

## C. Advancing the Status of Women

The creation of a peaceful and sustainable world civilization will be

impossible without the full participation of women in every arena of human

activity.[35] While this proposition is increasingly supported, there is a marked

difference between intellectual acceptance and its implementation.

It is time for the institutions of the world, composed mainly of men, to

use their influence to promote the systematic inclusion of women, not out of

condescension or presumed self-sacrifice but as an act motivated by the belief

that the contributions of women are required for society to progress.[36] Only

as the contributions of women are valued will they be sought out and woven

into the fabric of society. The result will be a more peaceful, balanced, just

and prosperous civilization.[37]

The obvious biological differences between the sexes need not be a cause

for inequality or disunity. Rather, they are an aspect of complementarity. If the

role of women as mothers is properly valued, their work in nurturing and

educating children will be respected and properly rewarded. It should also be

acknowledged that the child-bearing role does not diminish one’s aptitude for

leadership, or undermine one’s intellectual, scientific or creative capacity.

Indeed, it may be an enhancement.

We believe progress on a few critical fronts would have the greatest

impact on the advancement of women. We share the following perspectives

which are foundational to the recommendations which follow.

First and foremost, violence against women and girls, one of the most

blatant and widespread abuses of human rights, must be eradicated. Violence

has been a fact of life for many women throughout the world, regardless of

race, class, or educational background. In many societies, traditional beliefs

that women are inferior or a burden make them easy targets of anger and

frustration. Even strong legal remedies and enforcement mechanisms will have

little effect until they are supported by a transformation in the attitudes of

men. Women will not be safe until a new social conscience takes hold, one

which will make the mere expression of condescending attitudes towards

women, let alone any form of physical violence, a cause for deep shame.

Second, the family remains the basic building block of society and behav-

iors observed and learned there will be projected onto interactions at all other

levels of society. Therefore, the members of the institution of the family must

be transformed so that the principle of equality of women and men is inter-

nalized. Further, if the bonds of love and unity cement family relationships,

the impact will reach beyond its borders and affect society as a whole.

Third, while the overall goal of any society must be to educate all its

members, at this stage in human history the greatest need is to educate women

and girls.[38] For over twenty years, studies have consistently documented that,

of all possible investments, educating women and girls pays the highest over-

all dividends in terms of social development, the eradication of poverty and

the advancement of community.[39]

Fourth, the global dialogue on the role of men and women must promote

recognition of the intrinsic complementarity of the two sexes. For the differ-

ences between them are a natural assertion of the necessity of women and

men to work together to bring to fruition their potentialities for advancing

civilization, no less than for perpetuating the human race. Such differences

are inherent in the interactive character of their common humanity. This dia-

logue needs to consider the historical forces which have led to the oppression

of women and examine the new social, political and spiritual realities which

are today transforming our civilization.

As a starting point for this dialogue we offer this analogy from the

Bahá’í Writings: “The world of humanity has two wings—one is women and

the other men. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly.

Should one wing remain weak, flight is impossible.”[40] In addition, we sup-

port the following three specific measures.

### 1. Increasing the participation of women in member state delegations

We recommend that member states be encouraged to appoint an

increased number of women to ambassadorial or similar diplomatic positions.

### 2. Encouraging universal ratification of international con- ventions that protect women’s rights and improve their status

As with the international conventions on human rights, the Secretary-

General and all bodies of the UN should consider every opportunity to

encourage member states to proceed with ratification of conventions and

protocols that protect women’s rights and seek their advancement.

### 3. Planning ahead for implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action

The Forward-Looking Strategies declaration adopted at the Nairobi con-

ference was highly bold and imaginative, yet its implementation was rather

ineffective.[41] We believe that a lesson should be learned from this unfortunate

experience and deliberate plans be put into place to ensure that the Platform

of Action emerging from the Beijing conference does not meet a similar fate.

We propose that a monitoring system be established to prepare status

reports on the implementation of adopted measures and to make presenta-

tions to the General Assembly annually, highlighting the top twenty and

bottom twenty member states in terms of compliance.

## D. Emphasizing Moral Development

The process of integrating human beings into larger and larger groups,

although influenced by culture and geography, has been driven largely by reli-

gion, the most powerful agent for changing human attitudes and behavior. By

religion, however, we mean the essential foundation or reality of religion, not

the dogmas and blind imitations which have gradually encrusted it and which

are the cause of its decline and effacement.

In the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá “Material civilization is like the body. No

matter how infinitely graceful, elegant and beautiful it may be, it is dead.

Divine civilization is like the spirit, and the body gets its life from the spirit *…*.

Without the spirit the world of mankind is lifeless.”[42]

The concept of promoting specific morals or values may be controversial,

especially in this age of humanistic relativism. Nevertheless, we firmly believe

there exists a common set of values that have been obscured from recognition

by those who exaggerate minor differences in religious or cultural practice for

political purposes.[43] These foundation virtues, taught by all spiritual commu-

nities, constitute a basic framework for moral development.

Reflection on the commonalties inherent in the great religious and moral

systems of the world reveals that each one espouses unity, cooperation and

harmony among people, establishes guidelines for responsible behavior and

supports the development of virtues which are the foundation for trust-based

and principled interactions.[44]

### 1. Promoting the development of curricula for moral education in schools

We advocate a universal campaign to promote moral development.

Simply put, this campaign should encourage and assist local initiatives all over

the world to incorporate a moral dimension into the education of children.

It may necessitate the holding of conferences, the publication of relevant

materials and many other supportive activities, all of which represent a solid

investment in a future generation.

This campaign for moral development may begin with a few simple pre-

cepts. For example, rectitude of conduct, trustworthiness, and honesty are the

foundation for stability and progress; altruism should guide all human

endeavor, such that sincerity and respect for the rights of others become an

integral part of every individual’s actions; service to humanity is the true

source of happiness, honor and meaning in life.

We also believe the campaign will be successful only to the extent that

the force of religion is relied upon in the effort. The doctrine of the separation

of church and state should not be used as a shield to block this salutary

influence. Specifically, religious communities will have to be drawn in as

collaborative partners in this important initiative.

As it proceeds, this campaign will accelerate a process of individual

empowerment that will transform the way in which people, regardless of eco-

nomic class, social standing, or ethnic, racial or religious background, interact

with their society.

# V. A Turning Point for All Nations: A Call to World Leaders

We have reached a turning point in the progress of nations.

“Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage

which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-

state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established.

World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving.

Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereign-

ty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon

this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and

establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental

principle of its life.”[45]

Over a century ago, Bahá’u’lláh taught that there is but one God, that

there is only one human race, and that all the world’s religions represent

stages in the revelation of God’s will and purpose for humanity. Bahá’u’lláh

announced the arrival of the time, foretold in all of the world’s scriptures,

when humanity would at last witness the uniting of all peoples into a peaceful

and integrated society.

He said that human destiny lies not merely in the creation of a materially

prosperous society, but also in the construction of a global civilization where

individuals are encouraged to act as moral beings who understand their true

nature and are able to progress toward a greater fulfilment that no degree of

material bounty alone can provide.

Bahá’u’lláh was also among the first to invoke the phrase “new world

order” to describe the momentous changes in the political, social and religious

life of the world. “The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be

discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing Order appeareth to be lamentably

defective,” He wrote. “Soon will the present-day order be rolled up and a new

one spread out in its stead.”[46]

To this end, He laid a charge on the leaders and members of society

alike. “It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but

rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country and

mankind its citizens.”[47]

Above all else, leaders for the next generation must be motivated by a

sincere desire to serve the entire community and must understand that leader-

ship is a responsibility; not a path to privilege. For too long, leadership has

been understood, by both leaders and followers, as the assertion of control

over others. Indeed, this age demands a new definition of leadership and a

new type of leader.[48]

This is especially true in the international arena. In order to establish a

sense of trust, win the confidence, and inculcate a fond affinity in the hearts of

the world’s people for institutions of the international order, these leaders will

have to reflect on their own actions.

Through an unblemished record of personal integrity, they must help

restore confidence and trust in government. They must embody the character-

istics of honesty, humility and sincerity of purpose in seeking the truth of a sit-

uation. They must be committed to and guided by principles, thereby acting

in the best long-term interests of humanity as a whole.

“Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own

selves,” Bahá’u’lláh wrote. “Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let

your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of

mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men.”[49]

# Endnotes

1 Boutros-Ghali, Boutros. 1992. An Agenda for Peace: Peace-making and Peace-

Keeping. Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to the Statement Adopted by the

Summit Meeting of the Security Council, January 31, New York: United Nations.

2 Surely the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations is among the most inspired

passages in the history of human governance:

“WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

“to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our life-

time has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

“to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the

human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and

small, and

“to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations aris-

ing from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

“to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

“AND FOR THESE ENDS

“to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good

neighbors, and

“to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

“to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institutions of methods, that

armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

“to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social

advancement of all peoples,

“HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH

THESE AIMS.

“Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in

the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good

and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do

hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.”

United Nations. 1994. *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International*

*Court of Justice*. United Nations Department of Public Information. DPI/511 - 93243 -

April 1994 - 40M.

3 The World Bank. 1994. *World Development Report*. pp. 162-163. (Oxford: Oxford

University Press.)

4 There have been a number of recent proposals which discuss the need for reforms in

the United Nations system within a particular issue area. *Our Common Future*, the

report of The World Commission on Environment and Development, for example,

suggested a number of changes, such as the creation of a special UN “Board for

Sustainable Development” to coordinate UN action in promoting development while

protecting the environment. The World Commission on Environment and

Development, *Our Common Future*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.)

Likewise, the report of The Brandt Commission, “Common Crisis North-South:

Co-operation for World Recovery”, makes suggestions for reform in the critical area of

finance, trade and energy, as they affect North-South imbalances.

The Brandt Commission, *Common Crisis North-South: Co-operation for World*

*Recovery*. (London: Pan Books, 1983.)

The literature proposing widespread changes in the United Nations is also volu-

minous and continues to grow, especially in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the

United Nations. The first major and serious reassessments of the United Nations began

in the 1950s, in anticipation of the 10th anniversary of the Charter. In this regard the

publication in 1958 of *World Peace Through World Law* by Louis B. Sohn and

Grenville Clark, which was among the first solid proposals to suggest eliminating the

veto power, must be considered a milestone.

Grenville Clark, and Louis B. Sohn, *World Peace Through World Law*. (Cambridge,

Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966.)

More recent proposals range from The Stockholm Initiative, which offers a gener-

alist vision of what might be done to strengthen the United Nations, to Harold

Stassen’s recent *United Nations: a Working Paper for Restructuring*, which gives an

article-by-article proposal for rewriting the UN Charter. Benjamin Ferencz’s latest

book, *New Legal Foundations for Global Survival*, offers a series of hard-headed and

legal-minded suggestions for reform based on the premise that nations, peoples and

individuals must be free to pursue their destinies in whatever way they may see fit—

providing it does not jeopardize or destroy the fundamental human rights of others to

live in peace and dignity.

The Stockholm Initiative on Global Security and Governance 1991. *Common*

*Responsibility in the 1990’s*. (Stockholm: Prime Minister’s Office, Stockholm, Sweden.)

Harold Stassen, *United Nations: A Working Paper for Restructuring*. (Minneapolis:

Learner Publications Company, 1994.)

Benjamin Ferencz, *New Legal Foundations for Global Survival* (Oceana Publications,

1994)

5 The Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood*. (New York:

Oxford University Press, 1995.)

6 Many thinkers have recognized the reality of oneness and understood its implications

for the development of human society, including paleontologist Richard Leaky: “We

are one species, one people. Every individual on this earth is a member of ‘homo sapiens

sapiens’, and the geographical variations we see among peoples are simply biological

nuances on the basic theme. The human capacity for culture permits its elaboration in

widely different and colorful ways. The often very deep differences between those cul-

tures should not be seen as divisions between people. Instead, cultures should be inter-

preted for what they really are: the ultimate declaration of belonging to the human

species.”

Richard E. Leakey, and Rodger Lewin, *Origins: What new discoveries reveal about the*

*emergence of our species and its possible future*. (New York: Dutton, 1977.)

In general terms, the writings of Shoghi Effendi offer a thorough and extended

exposition on the concept of the oneness of humanity. A brief summary of the concept,

as Bahá’ís view it, can be found in *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*.

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing

Trust. 1938.) pp. 42-43.

7 We are not alone in making this proposal. The Commission on Global Governance

writes in *Our Global Neighborhood*: “Our recommendation is that the General

Assembly should agree to hold a World Conference on Governance in 1998, with its

decisions to be ratified and put into effect by 2000.”

The Report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood*.

(New York: Oxford University Press. 1995.) p. 351.

8 Two commonly used maxims illustrate this principle. “Small is beautiful,” a maxim

coined in the early ‘70s as an economic principle, applies equally to governance.

Schumacher explains: “In the affairs of men, there always appears to be a need for at

least two things simultaneously, which, on the face of it, seem to be incompatible and

to exclude one another. We always need both freedom and order. We need the freedom

of lots and lots of small, autonomous unities, and, at the same time, the orderliness of

large-scale, possibly global, unity and coordination.”

Schumacher, E. F. *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*. (New York:

Harper and Row, 1973.) p. 65.

“Think globally, act locally,” a slogan promoted by environmental and communi-

ty development activists, captures a perspective in which the need for overall global

coordination is carefully balanced against the need for local and national autonomy.

9 “Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society … [a system

of world governance] seeks to broaden its basis, to remold its institutions in a manner

consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate

allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the

flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men’s hearts, nor to abolish the system of

national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided.

It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of

climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate

the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspira-

tion than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of

national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudi-

ates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on

the other.”

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing

Trust. 1974.) pp. 41-42.

10 Writing in the 1930s, Shoghi Effendi, who then led the worldwide Bahá’í communi-

ty, sketched out some of the functions and responsibilities for a future world legisla-

ture. Among other things, he wrote: “a world legislature, whose members will, as

trustees of the whole of mankind … enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the

life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples.”

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing

Trust. 1974) p. 203

This view is shared by such scholars as Jan Tinbergen, winner of the 1969 Nobel

prize for Economics, who stated, “Mankind’s problems can no longer be solved by

national governments. What is needed is a World Government. This can best be

achieved by strengthening the United Nations system.”

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Human Development Report 1994.

*Global Governance for the 21st Century*. (New York: Oxford University Press.) p. 88.

11 Bahá’í International Community. Proposals to the United Nations for Charter

Revision. May 23, 1955.

12 Throughout His writings, Bahá’u’lláh consistently uses the terms “order”, “world

order” and “new world order” to describe the ongoing and momentous series of

changes in the political, social and religious life of the world. In the late 1860s, He

wrote: “The world’s equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of

this most great, this new World Order. Mankind’s ordered life hath been revolution-

ized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mor-

tal eyes have never witnessed.”

Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. Translated by Shoghi Effendi and a Committee at the

Bahá’í World Centre. (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1992.)

13 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*. Trans. Marzieh Gail. (Wilmette,

Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1957.) p. 24.

14 United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), *States of*

*Disarray: The social effects of globalization.* (London: KPC Group. 1995) pp. 106-109.

15 There are many ways that such a Commission, or even the World Legislature itself,

might go about determining fair and just borders for all nations. But as daunting as the

task may seem, it is an important part of the process of building a new order. Wrote

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “True civilization will unfurl its banner in the midmost heart of the

world whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns—

the shining exemplars of devotion and determination—shall, for the good and happi-

ness of all mankind, arise, with firm resolve and clear vision, to establish the Cause of

Universal Peace. They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consulta-

tion, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the

world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions

of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world

and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking

—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as

sacred by all that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to

ensure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing

Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles

underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and

all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the

armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if the preparations for

war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will

arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact

should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the

governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human

race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that gov-

ernment. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world,

it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*. Trans. Marzieh Gail. (Wilmette, Ill.:

Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1957.) pp. 64-65.

16 According to a recent article in *The New York Times*, charitable giving in the United

States in 1994 rose by 3.6 percent to $130 billion.

Karen W. Arenson, “Charitable Giving Rose 3.6% in 1994, Philanthropy Trust Says,”

*The New York Times*, Thursday, 25 May 1995, sec. A, p. 22.

17 “Regarding the whole question of an International Language …. We, as Bahá’ís, are

very anxious to see a universal auxiliary tongue adopted as soon as possible; we are

not the protagonists of any one language to fill this post. If the governments of the

world agree on an existing language, or a constructed, new tongue, to be used interna-

tionally, we would heartily support it because we desire to see this step in the unifica-

tion of the human race take place as soon as possible.”

Shoghi Effendi, *Directives of the Guardian*. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust.) p. 39.

In making this proposal, we wish to call attention to the term “auxiliary”. The

Bahá’í teachings value and promote cultural diversity, not uniformity. At this point in

history, then, we do not envision imposing a single language worldwide. Rather, what

we imagine is that peoples and nations would keep their own local and national lan-

guages—while at the same time be encouraged to learn a universal language. Certainly

such a universal language should ultimately be taught, as a required subject, in all of

the world’s schools. But this should in no way detract from legitimate expressions of

national and local linguistic and cultural diversity.

18 “The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one

universal language and one common script,” wrote Bahá’u’lláh in the late-1800s.

“When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were

entering his own home.”

Shoghi Effendi, trans. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*. (Wilmette, Ill.:

Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1983.) p. 250.

19 In a “special contribution” to the 1994 Human Development Report, James Tobin,

winner of the 1981 Nobel Prize for Economics, observes that “a permanent single cur-

rency” would eliminate much if not all of the turbulence currently associated with the

huge amount of currency speculation on world markets today. Observing that such a

single world currency is probably a long way off, he proposes as an interim measure

an “international uniform tax” on spot transactions in foreign exchange.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Human Development Report

1994. *A Tax on International Currency Transactions*. (New York: Oxford University

Press.) p. 70.

20 The principle of collective security was put forth by Bahá’u’lláh over a century ago

in letters to the kings and rulers of the world: “Be united, 0 kings of the earth, for

thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest,

if ye be of them that comprehend. Should anyone among you take up arms against

another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.”

Shoghi Effendi, trans. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*. (Wilmette, Ill.:

Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1976.) p. 254.

21 The Report of the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations. *The*

*United Nations in its Second Half-Century*. (Yale University Press Service, 1995.) p. 16.

22 Glenview Foundation, *The Stassen Draft Charter for a New United Nations to*

*Emerge from the Original, to Serve World Peace and Progress for the Next Forty*

*Years*. (Philadelphia: Glenview Foundation. 1985.)

Grenville Clark and Louis B. Sohn, *World Peace Through World Law*. (Cambridge,

Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966.)

Keith Hindell, “Reform of the United Nations?” in *The World Today: Journal of the Royal*

*Institute of International Affairs*. (United Kingdom, Feb. 1992.) Vol. 48, No. 2. pp. 30-33.

John Logue, “New World Order Means Reformed U.N.”, *World Federalist News*, July 1992.

Benjamin B. Ferencz and Ken Keyes Jr., *Planethood: The Key to Your Future*. (Coos

Bay, Oregon: Love Line Books. 1991.)

Boutros-Ghali, Boutros. 1992. An Agenda for Peace: Peace-making and Peace-

Keeping. Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to the Statement Adopted by the

Summit Meeting of the Security Council, January 31, New York: United Nations.

23 This is not to say that steps to ban such weapons should await the full development

and deployment of such a Force. We wholeheartedly support current steps to renew

the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to firmly establish a com-

prehensive test ban, as well as any further efforts to eliminate nuclear, chemical and/or

biological weapons. Likewise, stronger efforts must be made to restrict and control

conventional weapons such as land mines, which kill indiscriminately.

24 Mahbub ul Haq, 1994. Senior Advisor to UNDP Administrator. Team Leader of the

Group that prepares the UNDP annual Human Development Reports which have

brought, in recent years, fresh insights to development theory and practice, including a

new concept on human security.

25 Erskine Childers, ed. *Challenges to the United Nations: Building a Safer World*.

(New York: St. Martin’s Press. 1994.) pp. 21-25.

26 John Huddleston, *The Search for a Just Society*. (Kidlington, Oxford: George

Ronald. 1989.)

27 About 75 years ago ‘Abdu’l-Bahá offered the following suggestions for a future

world court: “the national assemblies of each country and nation—that is to say par-

liaments—should elect two or three persons who are the choicest of that nation, and

are well informed concerning international laws and the relations between govern-

ments and aware of the essential needs of the world of humanity in this day. The num-

ber of these representatives should be in proportion to the number of inhabitants of

that country. The election of these souls who are chosen by the national assembly, that

is, the parliament, must be confirmed by the upper house, the congress and the cabinet

and also by the president or monarch so these persons may be the elected ones of all

the nation and the government. The Supreme Tribunal will be composed of these peo-

ple, and all mankind will thus have a share therein, for every one of these delegates is

fully representative of his nation. When the Supreme Tribunal gives a ruling on any

international question, either unanimously or by majority rule, there will no longer be

any pretext for the plaintiff or ground of objection for the defendant. In case any of

the governments or nations, in the execution of the irrefutable decision of the Supreme

Tribunal, be negligent or dilatory, the rest of the nations will rise up against it, because

all the governments and nations of the world are the supporters of this Supreme

Tribunal. Consider what a firm foundation this is! But by a limited and restricted

League the purpose will not be realized as it ought and should.”

*Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*. Compiled by the Research Department

of the Universal House of Justice. Translated by a Committee at the Bahá’í World

Centre and by Marzieh Gail. (Great Britain: W & J Mackay Ltd. 1978.) pp. 306-307.

28 At the present time, for example, the Court’s jurisdiction is limited to 1) cases which

the parties refer to it jointly by special agreement, 2) matters concerning a treaty or

convention in force which provides for reference to the Court, and 3) specified classes

of legal disputes between States for which they have recognized the jurisdiction of the

Court as compulsory.

Europa World Year Book 1994. Vol. I. *International Court of Justice*. p. 22.

29 Shoghi Effendi, trans. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*. (Wilmette, Ill.:

Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1983.) p. 260.

“The primary most urgent requirement is the promotion of education. It is incon-

ceivable that any nation should achieve prosperity and success unless this paramount,

this fundamental concern is carried forward. The principal reason for the decline and

fall of peoples is ignorance. Today the mass of the people are uninformed even as to

ordinary affairs, how much less do they grasp the core of the important problems and

complex needs of the time.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá. *The Secret of Divine Civilization*. Trans. Marzieh Gail. (Wilmette, Ill.:

Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1957.) p. 109.

“This same difference is noticeable among animals; some have been domesticated,

educated, others left wild. The proof is clear that the world of nature is imperfect, the

world of education perfect. That is to say, man is rescued from the exigencies of nature

by training and culture; consequently, education is necessary, obligatory. But education

is of various kinds. There is a training and development of the physical body which

ensures strength and growth. There is intellectual education or mental training for

which schools and colleges are founded. The third kind of education is that of the spirit.

Through the breaths of the Holy Spirit man is uplifted into the world of moralities and

illumined by the lights of divine bestowals. The moral world is only attained through

the effulgence of the Sun of Reality and the quickening life of the divine spirit.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in a talk delivered in St. Paul on 20 September 1912. *The Promulgation*

*of Universal Peace*. p. 329-330.

30 Governments and their partners must bear in mind that material equality is neither

achievable nor desirable. Absolute equality is a chimera. At various points along the

way, there will nevertheless be the necessity for the redistribution of some of the

world’s wealth. For, indeed, it is becoming increasingly obvious that unbridled capital-

ism does not provide the answer either. Some regulation and redistribution is necessary

to promote material justice. In this regard, a tax on income is, in principle, one of the

fairest and most equitable means. There must also be a role for the voluntary sharing

of wealth—both at an individual and an institutional level. Equal opportunities for

economic advancement and progress, however, must be woven into the very fabric of

the new order. Ultimately, the most important regulation on any economic system is

the moral regulation that begins in the hearts and minds of people.

31 The Establishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a commendable first

step in the right direction and may be useful in the long run, as one of the tools that

could be the basis for funding Agenda 21, if its operational scale is enlarged and its

mandate redefined.

32 World Conference on Human Rights. Vienna Declaration and Programme of

Action. 14-25 June 1993. Vienna, Austria.

33 A further elaboration of this concept can be found in *The Prosperity of Humankind*,

a statement of the Bahá’í International Community, Office of Public Information, pub-

lished in February 1995: “The activity most intimately linked to the consciousness that

distinguishes human nature is the individual’s exploration of reality for himself or her-

self. The freedom to investigate the purpose of existence and to develop the endow-

ments of human nature that make it achievable requires protection. Human beings

must be free to know. That such freedom is often abused and such abuse grossly

encouraged by features of contemporary society does not detract in any degree from

the validity of the impulse itself.

“It is this distinguishing impulse of human consciousness that provides the moral

imperative for the enunciation of many of the rights enshrined in the Universal

Declaration and the related Covenants. Universal education, freedom of movement,

access to information, and the opportunity to participate in political life are all aspects

of its operation that require explicit guarantee by the international community. The

same is true of freedom of thought and belief, including religious liberty, along with

the right to hold opinions and express these opinions appropriately.

“Since the body of humankind is one and indivisible, each member of the race is

born into the world as a trust of the whole. This trusteeship constitutes the moral

foundation of most of the other rights—principally economic and social—which the

instruments of the United Nations are attempting similarly to define. The security of

the family and the home, the ownership of property, and the right to privacy are all

implied in such a trusteeship. The obligations on the part of the community extend to

the provision of employment, mental and physical health care, social security, fair

wages, rest and recreation, and a host of other reasonable expectations on the part of

the individual members of society.

“The principle of collective trusteeship creates also the right of every person to

expect that those cultural conditions essential to his or her identity enjoy the protec-

tion of national and international law. Much like the role played by the gene pool in

the biological life of humankind and its environment, the immense wealth of cultural

diversity achieved over thousands of years is vital to the social and economic develop-

ment of a human race experiencing its collective coming-of-age. It represents a her-

itage that must be permitted to bear its fruit in a global civilization. On the one hand,

cultural expressions need to be protected from suffocation by the materialistic influ-

ences currently holding sway. On the other, cultures must be enabled to interact with

one another in ever-changing patterns of civilization, free of manipulation for partisan

political ends.”

Bahá’í International Community, Office of Public Information, *The Prosperity of*

*Humankind*. (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre. 1995.)

34 Ultimately, respect for human rights must begin in the family: “Compare the nations

of the world to the members of a family. A family is a nation in miniature. Simply

enlarge the circle of the household, and you have the nation. Enlarge the circle of

nations, and you have all humanity. The conditions surrounding the family surround

the nation. The happenings in the family are the happenings in the life of the nation.

Would it add to the progress and advancement of a family if dissensions should arise

among its members, all fighting, pillaging each other, jealous and revengeful of injury,

seeking selfish advantage? Nay, this would be the cause of the effacement of progress

and advancement. So it is in the great family of nations, for nations are but an aggre-

gate of families. Therefore, as strife and dissension destroy a family and prevent its

progress, so nations are destroyed and advancement hindered.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

*during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912*. Comp. Howard MacNutt.

(Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1982.) p. 157

35 “When all mankind shall receive the same opportunity of education and the equality

of men and women be realized, the foundations of war will be utterly destroyed.

Without equality this will be impossible because all differences and distinction are con-

ducive to discord and strife. Equality between men and women is conducive to the

abolition of warfare for the reason that women will never be willing to sanction it.

Mothers will not give their sons as sacrifices upon the battlefield after twenty years of

anxiety and loving devotion in rearing them from infancy, no matter what cause they

are called upon to defend. There is no doubt that when women obtain equality of

rights, war will entirely cease among mankind.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*. Comp. Howard MacNutt.

(Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1982.) pp. 174-175.

36 “Let it be known once more that until woman and man recognize and realize equali-

ty, social and political progress here or anywhere will not be possible. For the world of

humanity consists of two parts or members: one is woman; the other is man. Until

these two members are equal in strength, the oneness of humanity cannot be estab-

lished, and the happiness and felicity of mankind will not be a reality. God willing, this

is to be so.” From a Talk by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Federation of Women’s Clubs, Chicago,

Illinois on 2 May 1912.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*. Comp. Howard MacNutt.

(Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1982.) p. 77.

37 “The world in the past has been ruled by force, and man has dominated over

woman by reason of his more forceful and aggressive qualities both of body and mind.

But the balance is already shifting—force is losing its weight and mental alertness,

intuition, and the spiritual qualities of love and service, in which woman is strong, are

gaining ascendancy. Hence the new age will be an age less masculine, and more perme-

ated with the feminine ideals—or, to speak more exactly, will be an age in which the

masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more evenly balanced.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in John E. Esslemont, *Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*, p. 156., 4th

rev. ed., 1976, Wilmette: Bahá’í Books, published by Pyramid Publications for Bahá’í

Publishing Trust.

38 This principle, that women and girls should receive priority over men and boys in

access to education, has been a long-standing principle in the Bahá’í teachings. Speaking

in 1912, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: “In proclaiming the oneness of mankind [Bahá’u’lláh]

taught that men and women are equal in the sight of God and that there is no distinc-

tion to be made between them. The only difference between them now is due to lack of

education and training. If woman is given equal opportunity of education, distinction

and estimate of inferiority will disappear. … Furthermore, the education of women is of

greater importance than the education of men, for they are the mothers of the race, and

mothers rear the children. The first teachers of children are the mothers. Therefore,

they must be capably trained in order to educate both sons and daughters. There are

many provisions in the words of Bahá’u’lláh in regard to this.

“He promulgated the adoption of the same course of education for man and

woman. Daughters and sons must follow the same curriculum of study, thereby pro-

moting unity of the sexes.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*. Comp. Howard MacNutt.

(Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1982.) pp. 174-175.

39 Lawrence H. Summers, Vice President & Chief Economist for the World Bank,

*Investing in All the People*. 1992. Also, USAID. 1989. *Technical Reports in Gender*

*and Development. Making the Case for the Gender Variable: Women and the Wealth*

*and Well-being of Nations*. Office of Women in Development.

40 *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*. Compiled by the Research

Department of the Universal House of Justice. Translated by a Committee at the

Bahá’í World Centre and by Marzieh Gail. (Great Britain: W & J Mackay Ltd. 1978.)

p. 302.

41 The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

As adopted by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the

United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi,

Kenya, 15-26 July 1985.

42 *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*. Compiled by the Research Department

of the Universal House of Justice. Translated by a Committee at the Bahá’í World

Centre and by Marzieh Gail. (Great Britain: W & J Mackay Ltd. 1978.) p. 303.

43 The interfaith declaration entitled “Towards a Global Ethic”, which was produced

by an assembly of religious and spiritual leaders from virtually every major world reli-

gion and spiritual movement at the 1993 Parliament of the World’s Religions in

Chicago, suggests that it is indeed possible for the world’s religions to find much com-

mon ground in this regard. The declaration states: “We affirm that a common set of

core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a

global ethic... There already exist ancient guidelines for human behavior which are

found in the teachings of the religions of the world and which are the condition for a

sustainable world order.”

44 The Golden Rule, the teaching that we should treat others as we ourselves

would wish to be treated, is an ethic variously repeated in all the great religions:

**Buddhism**: “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”

*Udana-Varqa*, 5:18.

**Zoroastrianism**: “That nature only is good when it shall not do unto another

whatever is not good for its own self.” *Dadistan-i Dinik*, 94:5.

**Judaism**: “What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire

Law, all the rest is commentary.” *The Talmud*, Shabbat, 31a.

**Hinduism**: “This is the sum of all true righteousness: deal with others as thou

wouldst thyself be dealt by. Do nothing to thy neighbour which thou wouldst

not have him do to thee after.” *The Mahabharata*.

**Christianity**: “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them like-

wise.” *Luke* 6:31.

**Islam**: “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he

desires for himself.” *Sunnah*.

**Taoism**: The good man “ought to pity the malignant tendencies of others; to

regard their gains as if they were his own, and their losses in the same way.”

*The Thai-Shang*.

**Confucianism**: “Surely it is the maxim of loving-kindness: Do not unto others

that you would not have them do unto you.” *Analects*, XV, 23

*Bahá’í Faith*: “He should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for

himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfil.” *Gleanings*.

45 Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing

Trust. 1938.) p. 202.

46 Bahá’u’lláh. *The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh*. (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre. 1978.)

p. 113.

47 Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*. Compiled by the Research Department of the

Universal House of Justice. Translated by Habib Taherzadeh with the assistance of a

Committee at the Bahá’í World Centre. (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre. 1982.) p. 167.

48 The Commission on Global Governance writes: “As the world faces the need for

enlightened responses to the challenges that arise on the eve of the new century, we are

concerned at the lack of leadership over a wide spectrum of human affairs. At national,

regional, and international levels, within communities and in international organizations,

in governments and in non-governmental bodies, the world needs credible and

sustained leadership.

“It needs leadership that is proactive, not simply reactive, that is inspired, not

simply functional, that looks to the longer term and future generations for whom the

present is held in trust. It needs leaders made strong by vision, sustained by ethics, and

revealed by political courage that looks beyond the next election.

“This cannot be leadership confined within domestic walls. It must reach beyond

country, race, religion, culture, language, life-style. It must embrace a wider human

constituency, be infused with a sense of caring for others, a sense of responsibility to

the global neighborhood.”

Report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood*.

(New York: Oxford University Press. 1995.) p. 353.

49 *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*. Translated by Shoghi Effendi.

(Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust. 1976.) p. 7.

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